

Narratives

Diversity:

Bring together different perspectives to agree upon a shared vision that is then adapted to each specific context.

Quality:

Ensure the conditions are in place for magic to happen between educators, children and families on a daily basis; trust that educators, when provided with appropriate working conditions, educational opportunities, curriculum frameworks, and well-funded, inclusive, universal public system, are competent and capable.

Professionalization:

Improve the attractiveness of the profession to women, men, and non-binary people from diverse backgrounds; career opportunities to advance in the profession.

A future dream:

The value of ECEC is recognized by everybody. Take the time to understand each other, build trust, share experiences that work and do not work, be open and ready to learn from each other, and agree on a common vision.

Indigenous and International Inspirations:

How do the 27 countries of the European Union collaborate to ensure a common vision of early childhood education and care?

Introduction:

Géraldine Libreau, policy officer with the European Commission, is responsible for coordinating and assisting European Union member states to organize ECEC systems. She coordinates a working group with all 27 member states on inclusion and professionalization, as part of implementing the European Framework for Quality ECEC.

There are 27 different systems, and 24 official languages in the EU. They are all organized in different ways, and they all have their own terminology, cultural approaches, and legislation, as well as pedagogical approaches, value placed on ECEC, and purposes for ECEC. Given this diversity, creating opportunities for member states to dialogue and learn from one another leads to very exciting discussions and projects! Libreau shared two of the Commission's projects in a discussion with Iris Berger, [available here](#).

Overview of Project 1: European Framework for the Quality of ECEC

In 2014, a Commission Expert Group produced a [report](#) on the key principles of quality ECEC. This document was proposed and adopted by the member states in 2019 and signals that all the member states agree about what quality should be and that they commit to implementing this framework.

5 pillars of quality

1. Accessibility, availability, and affordability;
2. Well-qualified educators who remain in the profession;
3. Curriculum, a pedagogical framework for all ages;
4. Governance and adequate funding, coordination between local and national governing bodies, where responsibilities are clearly identified;
5. Monitoring and evaluation of quality, to adapt to contextualized needs of families and children.

These 5 pillars are like a jigsaw, you cannot achieve high-quality ECEC without ensuring that all 5 are met.

Overview of Project 2:

How to recruit, maintain, and motivate well-qualified staff

An example of how the quality framework is implemented across the member states is a Working Group that Libreau coordinated over the past two years. The group explored two challenges:

1. How to raise the attractiveness of the profession so that people join and remain in the profession?
2. How to make sure educators have the right competencies and skills and how we can improve their training?

They published a [report](#) based on research findings, policy recommendations, and examples of strategies from the different countries, which answers these key questions.

First, with regards to the attractiveness of the profession, **in order to make sure that the profession is recognized as something extremely valuable, we need early childhood education and care in general to be recognized as something valuable.**

As ECEC fosters inclusion, it is an educational part of the lifelong learning spectrum and we need qualified people. Some challenges include attracting more men into the profession, as well as people from different cultural backgrounds. Career opportunities for advancement are important so that educators have opportunities to grow professionally without leaving the sector. Decent working conditions, salaries, and support for educators as they age are also critical. The report proposes a mapping of competencies for assistants, core practitioners, and leaders or directors in ECEC and discusses professional learning and education.

Inspirations for Pan-Canadian ECEC systems:

As Canada goes forward with a federal ECEC strategy, we can find ways to work across jurisdictions and build a common vision that can be adapted to meet the specific needs of each province or territory, as well as each ECEC centre. [Federal Secretariat on Early Learning and Child Care](#), if it is made up of representatives from every province and territory, as well as Indigenous groups, can function like the EU working groups, defining and sharing a common vision and ensuring commitment regionally and locally. The EU project has been on-going since 1992. Working towards a common vision of the purpose, value, and strategies necessary for competent ECEC systems takes time, and a continued commitment to make sure educators, policy experts, families, children, researchers and the general public feel included and listened to. Permanent funding is necessary to ensure that the system we build will be competent and able to evolve over time.

[Access all references](#)

Prepared from Géraldine Libreau's presentation by Iris Berger & Joanne Lehrer for

SKETCHING NARRATIVES OF MOVEMENT TOWARDS COMPREHENSIVE AND COMPETENT EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATIONAL SYSTEMS ACROSS CANADA.

[View presentation](#)

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